

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Monday, 16th June 2008 at 7.00pm
at Hob Green Primary School, Stourbridge

PRESENT-

Councillors Adams, Attwood, Banks, Barlow, Mrs Cowell, Hanif, Jones, Kettle, Knowles, Lowe, Mrs Rogers, A Turner, Mrs Walker and C Wilson and following his co-option, Mr R Nokes

OFFICERS:-

Director of Law and Property (as Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection, Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Assistant Director Policy Performance and Resources, Assistant Director Housing, Area Community Renewal Officer (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Area Detached Youth worker (Children's Services), Group Accountant (Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement) and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Law and Property)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Sergeant T Osborne of West Midlands Police, together with approximately 30 members of the public were in attendance at the meeting.

1 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor C Wilson be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

2 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Martin and Mr G Downing.

3 **CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESSES**

The Chairman welcomed newly elected Members and expressed his appreciation to Councillors Adams and Mrs Cowell for their work during their period of office as Chairman and Vice Chair, respectively. The Chairman also paid tribute to the services to the Committee of former Councillor Mrs June Collins, and requested that a letter of thanks be sent to her on behalf of the Committee.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Attwood declared a prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No 15 (Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust – an application for permission to charge an admission fee for a family fun day at Stevens Park, Quarry Bank) in view of his being Chairman of the body, making the application, the Stourbridge and Black Country Events Corporation.

Councillor Banks declared a prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No 14 (Capital Allocations – an application by the Thomas Pocklington Trust) and a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item No 15 (Grant Applications: Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trusts: Application for Grants), in view of his having advised the Trust about the sensory garden.

Councillor Hanif declared a prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No 14 (Capital Allocations – applications by the Rufford Primary School PTFA and the Lye and Wollescote United Communities Group) in view of his being a Governor of the School and a Member of the Communities Group, respectively.

Mr Polychronakis declared a prejudicial interest, in Agenda Item No 14 (Capital Allocations – an application by Pedmore Cricket Club) in view of his membership of the Pedmore Cricket Club.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10th March 2008, be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following amendment:

That the words “all trains” be replaced by the words “some trains” in minute number 90 a) on page SAC/61.

6 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor A Turner be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

7 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the Terms of Reference and Protocol for Area Committees.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report and the appendices to the report submitted on the Terms of Reference and Protocol for Area Committees be noted.

8 CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the co-option of Members to serve on the Committee for the 2007/08 municipal year.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that Mr G Downing and Mr Rodney had indicated their willingness to stand for re-appointment. He further advised that Mr I Green and Ms P Shepherd had been unable to attend many meetings during the previous municipal year, owing to ill health.

It was reported that the Stourbridge Area Forum would nominate someone to represent local tenants and residents to serve as a co-opted Member at their annual general meeting in July.

Concerns were expressed that a representative of the ethnic minorities had not attended regularly during the previous municipal year. A suggestion was made that the representative should be from the Stourbridge area.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the following persons be re-appointed as co-opted Members of the Committee for the 2008/09 municipal year, representing group or organisation indicated:-

Mr G Downing – Local Businesses.
Mr R Nokes – Young People.

- (2) That consideration of the appointment of a representative for the Local Tenants and Residents, the Voluntary Community Sector and Ethnic Minorities be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.
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9 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the re-appointment of Working Groups for the 2008/09 municipal year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Stourbridge Area Committee Consultative Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the Consultative Group comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Councillor Adams and Mrs Cowell, together with the Co-opted Members of the Committee and representatives of the outside agencies with an interest in Stourbridge.
- (2) That the Stourbridge Town Centre Traffic Management Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the Working Group comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillors Adams, Knowles and Lowe.
- (3) That the Stourbridge Town Hall Working Group be reappointed for the ensuing municipal year with its existing terms of reference and that the Working Group comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillors Mrs Cowell, Hanif, Knowles and Mrs Walker.

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APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on the appointment of representatives of the Council to various outside organisations for the 2008/09 municipal year.

The Area Liaison Officer reported that a letter had been received from the Palmer and Seabright Charity advising that Councillor Vickers no longer fulfilled their criteria, as he did not live in Stourbridge. Councillor C Wilson indicated that he would be happy to act as a replacement for Councillor Vickers on the Charity.

With reference to the appointment to Lye Body Building Gym, it was suggested that Councillor Vickers remain on the Body, if he so wished. In the event that Councillor Vickers did not wish to remain on the Body, Councillor Hanif or Lowe undertook to act as his replacement.

Some Members expressed concern that they had not been invited to attend meetings of the bodies to which they had been appointed.

RESOLVED

That appointments to the organisations indicated be made as follows:-

	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Period of Office</u>
	<u>Social Inclusion</u>		
	Mary Stevens Hospice	The three members of the Council for the Pedmore and Stourbridge East Ward	Annual
	<u>Community Associations</u>		
(a)	Bodybuilding Gym	Councillor A. Turner and Councillor Vickers	Annual
(b)	Lye	The three members of Council for the Lye and Wollescote Ward	Annual
(c)	Norton	Councillor Adams	Annual
(d)	Valley Road Youth and Community Centre	The three members of the Council for the Lye and Wollescote Ward and Councillor Attwood	Annual
(e)	Withymoor	Councillor Banks	Annual
(f)	Palmer and Seabright Charity	Councillor C. Wilson	Until further notice

YOUTH ISSUES

Mr. Nokes reported on the aims and objectives of the Stourbridge Youth Committee Representatives group (SYCR) and its Constitution.

He also reported on the Cyberbus, which was operating on four nights per week. There were plans to investigate provision of further activities over the summer months.

Councillor Mrs. Walker, as Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, advised that as part of a review of Youth Service provision, she was hopeful that funding could be found to enable the Cyberbus to continue to operate four nights per week.

Councillor Lowe commented that he hoped that the Lye and Wollaston PACT partners might be able to work with young people to clear up certain areas.

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PUBLIC FORUM

Before reading questions from the public, the Area Liaison Officer stated that any questions which were not addressed at the meeting would receive a written response from the appropriate officer.

Questions and answers were then given as follows:-

- (a) A representative of the Stourbridge Township Council expressed a number of concerns relating to the length of time being taken to resolve the issues around the repair to the Grade II listed gates at Mary Stevens Park. The need for specialised metallurgy work to be undertaken and the appropriateness for College students to undertake such work and why the Council had not shared the findings of the technical report on this work were discussed. In response to comments made, the Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection (Directorate of the Urban Environment) advised that investigations were being undertaken and, as previously indicated, a full written report on this issue would be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee. She also stated that to date the technical report referred to had not been received. When the report had been received it would be shared with those concerned. It was commented that Health and Safety considerations might present difficulties in allowing students to carry out the remedial work. A member of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park group advised that some of the perimeter fencing at the park had been replaced by the Friends group. Due to the unstable state of parts of the brick wall, some parts of the fencing had not yet been replaced.
- (b) Queries were raised by two members of the public regarding traffic issues in Tall Trees Drive, Pedmore. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised he had responded to the issues raised prior to the meeting, to the effect that the resurfacing of Tall Trees Drive would be included in the Highway Maintenance Programme for the present financial year, subject to no statutory undertakers' work being required in that area.
- (c) Concerns were expressed by the same members of the public regarding on street parking close to Ham Dingle School. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that parking close to a road junction was illegal. He also indicated that Old Ham Lane, Shaftsbury Avenue, Leys Close and Tall Trees Drive would be added to a list from which future annual Traffic Regulation Order proposals would be selected.

- (d) The two members of the public also requested the introduction of traffic calming and a 20 mph speed limit for Old Ham Lane. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that an investigation was scheduled to commence in the 2009/10 financial year to determine justification for the possible inclusion of Old Ham Lane in a future year's Local Safety Scheme, or Safer Routes to Schools Programme.
- (e) A member of the public questioned whether the Council could be more proactive in arranging dates for Partnerships and Communities together (PACT) meetings so that they did not clash. A Member of the Committee commented on the need for fewer PACT meetings in some areas to enable Ward Councillors to attend the PACT meetings as well as their other Council commitments.
- Mr. Nokes advised that he would appreciate information on dates of PACT meetings to enable he and other young people to attend and lend support.
- (f) A member of the public queried whether the Council had any plans to implement the Government's recently published proposal for free swimming for the over 60's. The Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection advised that no details had yet been received on this issue.

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PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBERS VISITS TO ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE ESTABLISHMENTS 2007/08

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services was submitted on progress of visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments during the 2007/08 municipal year, which also requested further nominations to make visits in the 2008/09 municipal year.

In introducing the report, the Assistant Director Policy and Performance of the Directorate of Adult Community and Housing Services thanked all Members who had taken part in previous visits. He also advised that Members wishing to take part in the visits would need to be CRB checked and attend a training programme prior to commencement of visits. The Chairman encouraged Members to undertake these visits and requested that those willing to volunteer should contact the Assistant Director, Policy and Performance outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report now submitted be noted and that Members wishing to undertake visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments in 2008/09 be requested to contact the Directors of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Children's Services direct.

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in the application by the Pedmore Cricket Club, Mr. Polychronakis withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this application). In Mr Polychronakis' absence, The Group Accountant presented this application for consideration.

Upon his return to the meeting, Mr Polychronakis presented the remaining applications.

(Having previously declared prejudicial interests in certain applications Councillors Attwood, Banks and Hanif, withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the applications subject to their respective declarations).

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on eleven documented applications for funding from the Committee's capital allocations budget. The Area Liaison Officer advised that, since the report had been published he had received a further two applications, one each from the Stourbridge Chamber of Trade in relation to the Stourbridge in Bloom Festival and from the Ruskin Glass Centre in relation to equipment to be used during the International Festival of Glass.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that, due to the large number of applications received (13 in all), and the high value of the applications received to date, the Committee might like to consider a new additional criterion for determining applications with a value of £1,000 or more, except in the case of special circumstances which would warrant the approval of the application in the public interest. This would enable the Committee to have sufficient funding to distribute throughout the year.

A Member of the Committee commented on the need for the total allocation fund to be increased to keep up with inflation.

Following consideration of all the applications and taking into account the new criterion for determining applications , referred to above, it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the new criterion for determining applications with a value of over £1,000, as set out below , be approved:-

“For projects with a value of £1,000-00 or more applications will only be approved if:-

- a) the applicant can demonstrate that they will secure at least 50% of the cost of the project either from their own resource or from some other funding, and
- b) the applicant has not been awarded a capital allocation by the Committee or a grant from the Stevens Trust within the preceding three years

except, in either case, in the opinion of the Area Committee, there are special circumstances which would warrant the approval of the application in the public interest.

(2) That, having regard for the new criterion, the following applications be refused for the reasons given:-

- a) The application by the Pedmore Cricket Club, as the Club had received a grant in November 2007.
- b) The application by the Oldswinford Cricket Club, as the Club had received a grant in the last three years.
- c) The application by the Rufford Primary School PTFA, as the School had received a grant in 2005.
- d) The application by the Caledonia Residents Association, as the Association had received a grant in November 2007.
- e) The application by the Ruskin Glass Centre, as the Centre had received a grant in 2006, although the Committee recognised that the Festival of Glass was a prestigious event.

(3) That the following applications be refused for the reasons given:-

- a) The application by the Humaara Project, as the project was not considered to be for the benefit of the wider community.
- b) The application by the Thomas Pocklington Trust, as the Committee considered that the project was too large to be securely managed. The Trust was advised to resubmit an application for a smaller project supported by a local statement of accounts.

- (4) That, having regard for the new criterion, the sums referred to below be allocated to the following organisations for the purposes indicated:-

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
West Midlands Fire Service	Purchase of protective equipment, drill yard equipment and a PA system	£1,613
Stourbridge in Bloom	Purchase of Planters for Town Centre, as part of the Stourbridge in Bloom Competition	£5,000
Lye and Wollescote United Communities Group	Purchase of a Party/Events tent	£299.88
Black Country Visual Arts Network	Purchase of Exhibition Equipment	£1,185
Amblecote Allotments Guild	Purchase of composting toilet for the allotment site	£4,284.50
The What? Centre	Fitting of trunking over electric equipment	£672.50 (on the basis of match funding)

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GRANT APPLICATIONS – STEVENS PARK AND RECREATION GROUND FOUNDATION TRUST

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in this item, Councillors Attwood and Banks withdrew from the meeting during its consideration).

A report of the Director of Finance was submitted on a request for funding from the Trust.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that he had received a late request from the Stourbridge and Black Country Events Corporation for the Committee as

Trustees to approve an entry fee of £2 plus £1 parking fee for a Family Fun Day on Saturday 28th June, 2008 at Stevens Park, Quarry Bank.

Members requested that the Group produce detailed statements of accounts for the fun days at Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge in May 2008 and Stevens Park, Quarry Bank in June 2008.

The Area Liaison Officer also reported that the Friends of the Park Group wished the Committee to be aware that an architect had been commissioned to prepare plans for the development of a café in the pavilion at Mary Stevens Park.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the application from the Thomas Pocklington Trust for £5,000 towards the creation of a sensory garden be refused on the grounds that the Committee consider that the project is too large to be securely managed and that the Trust be invited instead to submit an application for a smaller project supported by a local statement of accounts for further consideration.
- (2) That the Stourbridge and Black Country Events Corporation be requested to produce detailed statements of accounts for the fun days at Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge in May 2008 and Stevens Park, Quarry Bank in June 2008.
- (3) That the information regarding the development of a café in the pavilion at Mary Stevens Park be noted.

BRITISH TELECOM CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED PUBLIC PAYPHONE REMOVALS

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on notice received from British Telecom that, owing to changes in the communications culture in recent years, mainly through the increase in mobile phone ownership, they proposed to remove a number of public pay phones in the Borough, three of which were located in the area of this Committee.

In addition, British Telecom had pointed out that they no longer had a requirement to consult on the removal of a public pay phone which had another pay phone within 400 metres. Out of courtesy, however, they had advised the Council that there were a number of pay phones in that category within the Borough that they would be addressing over the forthcoming months.

The purpose of the notice was to provide for consultation, in respect of which British Telecom had indicated that OFCOM had placed responsibility on local authorities to initiate their own consultation process and canvass the views of the local community with the Local Authority.

A Member of the Committee expressed disappointment that a payphone in Wollaston Village, which Ward Members had previously requested be removed on the grounds of anti social behaviour, was not on the list of payphones being considered for removal. The Ward Members requested that British Telecom be requested to add this payphone to the list for removal.

Another Member of the Committee expressed concerns that there were occasions when, for safety and emergencies, payphones were required by members of the public who did not have access to a telephone.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the proposals regarding the public pay phones proposed for the removal in the area of the Committee be noted.
- (2) That British Telecom be requested to consider the removal of the payphone in Wollaston Village.

COMMUNITY RENEWAL SERVICES

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted updating the Committee on the new arrangements for the Community Renewal Service.

The report indicated the structure of the service, as well as reporting on the current position with regard to the development of a Community Renewal Strategy by the Community Renewal Steering Group. The report also described the role of Area Community Renewal Officers, for the purpose of the Local Community Renewal Plan, the objectives of the Plan and the accountability arrangements proposed for the service and the role of Area Committees, local task groups and partnerships.

In relation to the latter issue, the report referred to the role of an Area Committee as being to address key issues in communities in order to bring some clarity to the delivery of services in complex areas such as health and equalities, community safety or social exclusion and stated the need for different communities and interests within the area to have a mechanism which enabled them to articulate their needs. It was being suggested to Area Committees, therefore, that each set up a Working Party to consider their draft plan more closely and amend it as needed to take account of member influence working with all agencies and sectors of the community.

It was suggested that the Area Community Renewal Officer for the area could investigate possible funding for projects such as the Humaara Project.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That the proposal to set up a Working Group of the Committee to engage in a further development of the draft Local Community Renewal Plan, supported by the Area Community Relations Officer and the Head of the Community Renewal Service, be deferred for consideration at a future meeting.

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RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on written responses to questions sent since the meeting of this Committee in March, 2007.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report submitted be noted.

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ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

- (a) Councillor A. Turner requested that a meeting with the new Chief Superintendent be arranged. He also requested that the Chief Superintendent be asked why police officers for the Penfields Estate were based at Kingswinford.
- (b) Councillor Knowles invited the Area Liaison Officer to give an update on the situation regarding the land at Corbett Hospital site, as raised previously by Honorary Alderman John Simpson. Mr. Polychronakis advised that the Dudley Group of Hospitals had finally replied to his letters, stating that they had taken legal advice regarding the land, originally left in Trust in the 19th Century. The result was that the National Health legislation overrides the Deed of Trust to allow the Health Service to dispose of the land covered by the Deed, provided the proceeds of the disposal are re-used to improve health services within the Borough of Dudley.
- (c) Councillor Hanif requested that the metal barrier at Lye Cross be investigated. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate this issue.
- (d) Councillor C. Wilson commented on the recent success of two of the sporting groups within Stourbridge. He requested that letters of congratulations be sent to:-
 - (i) Stourbridge Football Club regarding their success in gaining promotion to the Premier Division of the Southern League;
 - (ii) Stourbridge Rugby Club regarding their recent success, which placed them as the 33rd best rugby club in the country.

Councillor Banks commented that he had received an acknowledgement to his letter of congratulations to the Football Club.

- (e) Councillor Kettle requested that the grass verge in Drew Road be reinstated. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate this issue.

Councillor Kettle also raised concerns relating to a recent application for the installation of a telecommunications mast on the pavement in front of Wollescote Hall.

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SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

Information was given regarding the dates for future meetings of all Select Committees, which were held at the Council House, Dudley. Members of the public were welcome to attend such meetings.

RESOLVED

That the information given in respect of the dates of future meetings of Select Committees, be noted.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates and venues of future meetings of the Committee were noted as follows:-

3rd September, 2008 at 7.00 p.m. – Redhill School, Junction Road, Stourbridge

17th November, 2008 at 7.00 p.m. – Hob Green Primary School, Hob Green Road, Stourbridge

19th January, 2009 at 7.00 p.m. – Hob Green Primary School, Hob Green Road, Stourbridge

9th March, 2009 at 7.00 p.m. – Hob Green Primary School, Hob Green Road, Stourbridge

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN